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CHIARA LUBICH ANSWERS

The Gospel and everyday life

Question: The Words of the Gospel are very beautiful to read and to contemplate, but can I relate them to my everyday life?

Certainly! If ever there were words that could be translated into life, they are the words of the Gospel. Why? Because the Gospel, which is different from all other books, contains the words of Jesus and he is "Light for each man who comes into this world."

If we meditate just for a moment on the words of Jesus, on his teachings, we see that they can be put into practice by mothers, storekeepers, and street cleaners, by educated and uneducated people, by whites and blacks, by adults as well as young people, by men and women from all walks of life.

Unlike the words of the Gospel, the words contained in other books cannot be translated into life. At most, they make one theorize about life and often they are limited to a select group of people.

All of our life should be lived according to the Gospel, the book of God which in fact foresees every circumstance. It is necessary to merely take those words according to the Church's interpretation, and to live them. Then, one is better able to understand them because Jesus enlightens those who live what he says. In fact, he enlightens those who love, and loves those who do his will.

We are often Christians in name only, practicing certain traditions or holding to certain Christian ideas of which we are proud.

But the world requires much more from followers of Christ. It expects a re-evangelization of their entire way of thinking, wanting, and loving.

We cannot hide the immense talent of the Gospel which has been given to us because to do so would deprive humanity of an authentic Christianity which is joyful, rich in works and unity.

Question: One of the most interesting achievements of the Focolare Movement are the five towns: Loppiano (Florence) Italy, Fontem in Cameroon, Santa Maria (Recife) Brazil, O'Higgins in Argentina and Ottmaring in Germany. What is the significance of these towns for you, as the foundress of the Movement?

These towns would like to be the city placed on the hill which the Gospel describes. They live the Gospel and experience that the promises made by Jesus come true. For example 'give and you will receive' is an everyday experience. Victory over the world and confidence. 'Be confident — Jesus said — I have conquered the world' is also a daily experience. At Loppiano we have young men and young women who have come from all over the world — they are fine young people too I might add. On Sundays, thousands of people come to visit them but there is no danger of their being affected by the world.

At Loppiano and also in the other towns, all the Gospel truths are experienced. For example: 'May they be one, so that the world may believe'. There they are 'one' and many visitors begin to believe again.

At Loppiano, they experience the possession of the kingdom already on this earth, through poverty of spirit. I know of people who have gone to the Loppiano area and have asked, "Tell me where the town is where the Gospel is lived'. Yes, because we with these towns can say 'come and see'.

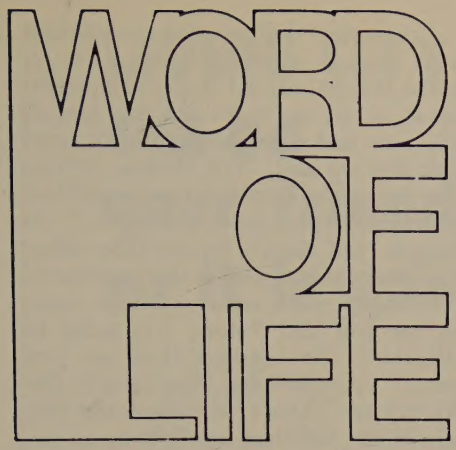
Loppiano is also a training center for young people. They help to build up these towns, but then when they go back into the world, they always have before them an experience of what the world should be like: it should be like one of these towns.

Question: How do you explain the fact that members of different churches feel attracted to the Movement?

It seems to me that the explanation is summed up by the impression of a young person who by chance went to a meeting of our Gen and said 'God is love and you have shown him to me'. Evidently he saw them united and realized, with his soul naturally, that someone was present among them: God who is love, the fruit of the reciprocal love among them.

When you accept God—love, you implicitly accept all Revelation and all the Christian faith.

Therefore, it is through unity that we made a breakthrough among the various Christian denominations and also among people of other faiths. ●



"If anyone comes to me
without turning his back
on his father and mother,
his wife and his children,
his brothers and sisters,
indeed his very self,
he cannot be my follower."

(Luke 14:26)

What do you think of this?

These words make drastic, unheard of demands; they ask a lot from us.

Yet, Jesus, who has said that marriage is indissoluble and has commanded us to love everyone, and in a particular way our parents, is now asking us to put in second place all the beautiful affections we have here on earth in case they become an obstacle to our direct, immediate love for him. Only God could ask so much.

In fact, Jesus pulls men away from their natural way of living in order to bind them above all to himself, and to create then a universal brotherhood on earth.

Therefore, wherever he finds an obstacle to his plan, he "cuts" and, in the Gospel he speaks, in a spiritual sense, of the "sword."

He calls those who have not known how to love him more than mother, spouse and life itself, "dead." Do you remember about the man who asked if he could bury his father before starting to follow Jesus? It was to him that Jesus answered, "Leave the dead to bury their dead" (Luke 9:60).

Perhaps, confronted with such a demand, you were stricken with fear. Perhaps you thought of relegating these words of Jesus to his own time, or of addressing them to those called to follow him in a particular way.

You are mistaken. These words are valid for every age, our own as well. They pertain to all Christians, also to you.

As time rushes by, you will encounter many opportunities to put this invitation of Christ into practice.

Is someone in your family opposed to Christianity? Jesus wants you to bear witness to him with your life and, at the right moment, with words, too, even at the cost of being ridiculed or slandered.

Are you a mother whose husband asks you to have an abortion? Obey God, and not man.

Somebody wants you to join in an activity whose goals are not clear, or are even suspicious. Break off with him.

Is there a relative who offers you money obtained illegally? Maintain your honesty.

Does your whole family encourage you to slow down, take it easy and enjoy the many things the world has to offer? Cut with them so that Christ may not withdraw from you.

"If anyone comes to me without turning his back on his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, indeed his very self, he cannot be my follower."

Are you from a family of non-believers? Did the fact of your conversion to Christ provoke division? Don't worry, for this is the result of living the Gospel. Offer God the anguish in your heart for those whom you love, but don't give up.

Did Christ call you to himself in a particular way, and is now the moment when the total gift of yourself demands that you leave father and mother or even your fiancee?

Make your choice.

There is no victory without a struggle.

"If anyone comes to me without turning his back on his father and mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and sisters, indeed his very self, he cannot be my follower."

"...indeed his very self..."

Do you live in a place where persecutions are common and where being a Christian puts your life in danger?

Take courage. At times, our Faith can ask this, too. The era of martyrdom is never completely finished in the Church. Therefore, each one of us will find himself having to choose between Christ and everything else in order to remain a real Christian, and, your turn will come too.

Don't be afraid.

Don't fear for your life. It is better to lose it for God than to never really find it. The other Life is the real one. Don't be afraid for your family, either. God loves them. One day, if you put them after him, he will come by and call them with the forceful words of his love and you will help them to become, with you, real disciples of Christ.

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

Each month a "Word of Life" appears in Living City or in its Supplement. The following are experiences that some of our readers shared with us in living the Word of Life.

I have two children, one is a nineteen year old son who is in college. He decided that he wanted to live in an apartment, so we sat down and told him all the pros and cons about an apartment. But also we said, "OK George. If you can live in the apartment as you did last year on campus, go on and get it." So he said, "OK Mom". He and three other boys were going to share this apartment.

Cleanup week came. George came to me and said "Mom, I'm going to Atlanta." So I said, "How are you going?" And he said, "I'm going in this friend's car." One of his roommates had an old car that had been sitting on the street for about a month, so they pooled their money together and had gotten this car fixed. I said, "Oh, George, you will never make it." But George did leave. The next night I got a phone call from an operator saying, "Mrs. Minor, will you accept a call from George Minor?" First of all I got angry, but a little something inside of me said, "Oh, just keep loving him, just keep loving him." So George was on the other end of the phone and he said, "Hi Mom, you were right, mom, we didn't make it. We had to get the bus to go to Atlanta. So I'm calling you now to ask you to send me a hundred and fifty dollars." So you know how I felt, but still this little thing inside kept telling me, "Just keep loving him, keep loving him." I got out of bed and went downtown. He had suggested sending it to the Western Union. He said "I'll be there waiting for it." So I sent the money to George, and George came in the next night and said, "Oh, Mom, you were right, I should have listened." Then he was around me all day and that afternoon telling me his plans about the trip and his plans for the coming year. He said to me, "Mom, you know next year I'm not going to be bothered with that apartment, it's too much of a hassle, because you know, the boys don't come up with their money for phone calls, food, and all those things — and my grades, I want to keep my grades up, so I don't have time to be bothered with that apartment. I'm going to commute next year".

M. M.

My young daughter and I were leaving on a trip, and as often happens, we were a little behind schedule. Finally we were on our way. We hadn't reached the main highway when my daughter said, "Oh, oh, I forgot my dog." This is a stuffed animal of which she is quite fond. Not wanting to turn back, I told myself quickly that she was old enough not to be so attached to such things. My response, that that was too bad, but it was too late, was met with silence. Remembering the word of life, "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me" (Lk. 9:23), I knew that I had to renounce my schedule again and offer to go back. I asked her if she really wanted to go back, and she said, "Yes." So we did.

As a matter of fact, when we arrived back home, I realized that something I had laid out for an older child was no longer where I had left it. I asked my daughter where she had put it. It entered my mind that she had maybe put it away thinking of using it herself at some later time. Recognizing this as another cross to take up, I simply explained what it was for and asked her to put it back. She didn't say anything, but she retrieved it and put it where I had left it.

And so we began our trip again, in a deeper atmosphere of mutual love.

M. W.

One morning on my way to work I stopped at the service station to have my carburetor checked. After a quick inspection the mechanic suggested I leave the car for several hours. This meant I would have to take the train to work and arrive late. With peace inside, I left the car and hurried to catch a bus to the train station.

When I arrived at the station I thought that it would be a good idea if I called my office to let them know that I was coming in a little late. When I entered the phone booth I put the dime in the slot, but for some reason I couldn't remember the phone number of my company. It was very odd that this would happen because I often call people and leave my phone number with them. After one unsuccessful guess I began looking for another dime. As I opened my brief case a young man standing near to the booth commented, "You seem to be a businessman." My reaction was to answer, "yes," but I pointed to my sandwich wrapped in a plastic bag, and indicated to him that I was a simple businessman, not the fancy type.

He asked me if he could have my sandwich. It was easy to give it to him. I'm not sure if it is because he seemed to need it more than me, or if it was just a natural reaction. I thought that if I were in his place I would like the apple as well, which was further down in the brief case. I offered him the apple, but he was content with the sandwich. He thanked me and went away.

When I found the dime to make the second attempt to call the office I remembered very clearly the phone number. I didn't have to call for information.

Later on that day, as I walked out of ne office at lunchtime, I realized that ny lunch for today consisted of an pple. I walked by a store that sold dif- erent kinds of foods. It came to my nind that I might buy a sandwich in nat store. But, I thought, if I buy a andwich, the small act of love that I ad made in the morning would dimin- sh in its totality.

Another idea came to my mind, "Set our hearts on his kingdom and these ther things will be given you as well" (Lk. 12:31). So I had an apple for my unch and it was very good.

When I returned to the office I just appened to be walking past the recep- ionist's desk and she asked me: "Would ou do me a favor; someone bought me his sandwich of half turkey and half acon. Would you like to take the tur- ey half of the sandwich? It's not my avorite." I was very happy to accept he turkey sandwich.

J. W.

Recently my husband and I had made n agreement with our teenage son imiting some aspects of his social life. After a couple of weeks, a situation ame up where we saw that he was lanning to go beyond the agreement vithout consulting us. We felt strongly hat we could not allow this, that he vould have to cancel his plans.

When we told our son of this deci- ion, he reacted very strongly. He spoke itterly about the agreement we had nade earlier, coming back with many rguments against our beliefs in the vhole matter.

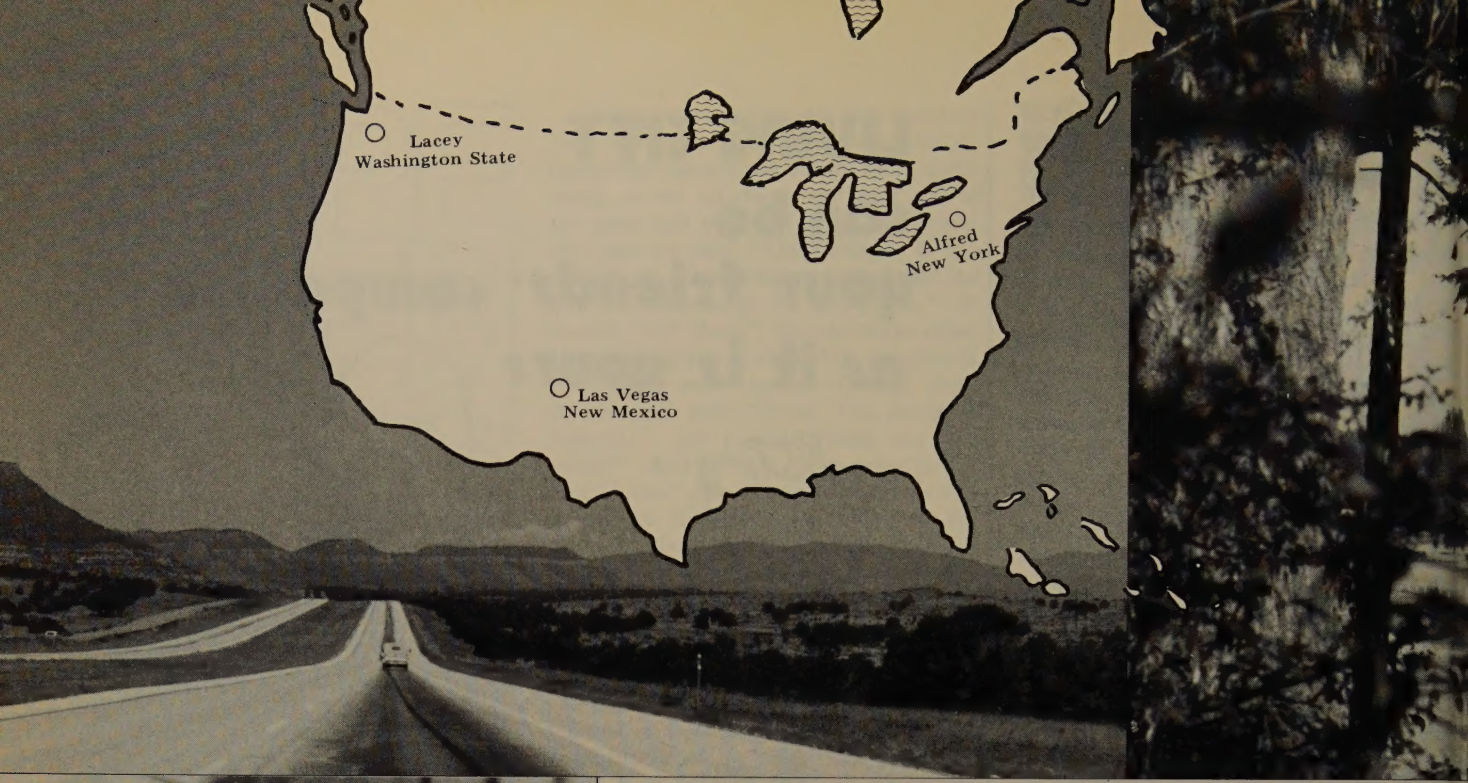
We understood that much of his anger vas because of having to tell his friends f his change in plans, and we felt his uffering in the whole situation. I hought of the word of life, "If anyone vants to be a follower of mine, let him enounce himself and take up his cross very day and follow me" (Lk. 9:23). t was very clear to me that I had a ross to take up right here. It was ime to put aside my hurt at his vords lashing out against us, and to ry to follow Jesus, who loved in the ace of everything.

Later I wondered whether the action ve had taken was necessary, and this oncern was another cross to be taken p. All the next day I tried to put side my own suffering over the matter n order to love my son. That evening said to him very simply that I was orry about the previous evening. He aid that he was sorry, too. No more eeded to be said; I knew that the ond between us had been strengthened s a result of trying to live the word f life in the situation.

N. N.

LIVING CITY can be your friends' companion as it is yours

Subscribe ALL of them for CHRISTMAS



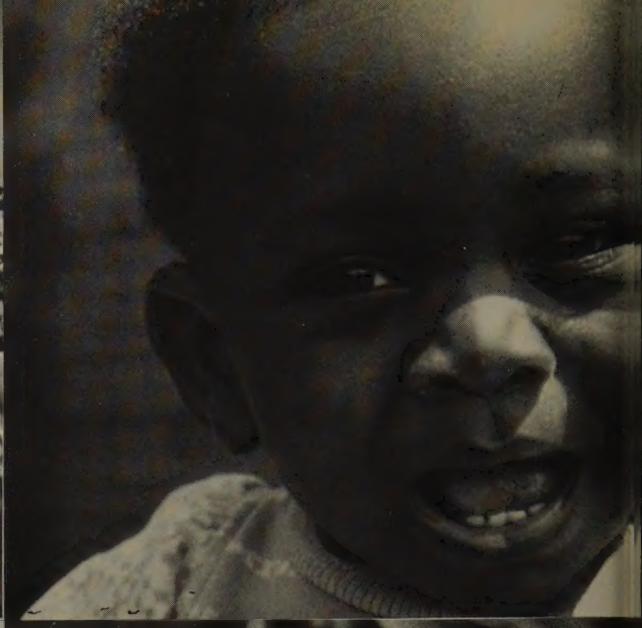
1978 MARIAPOLIS

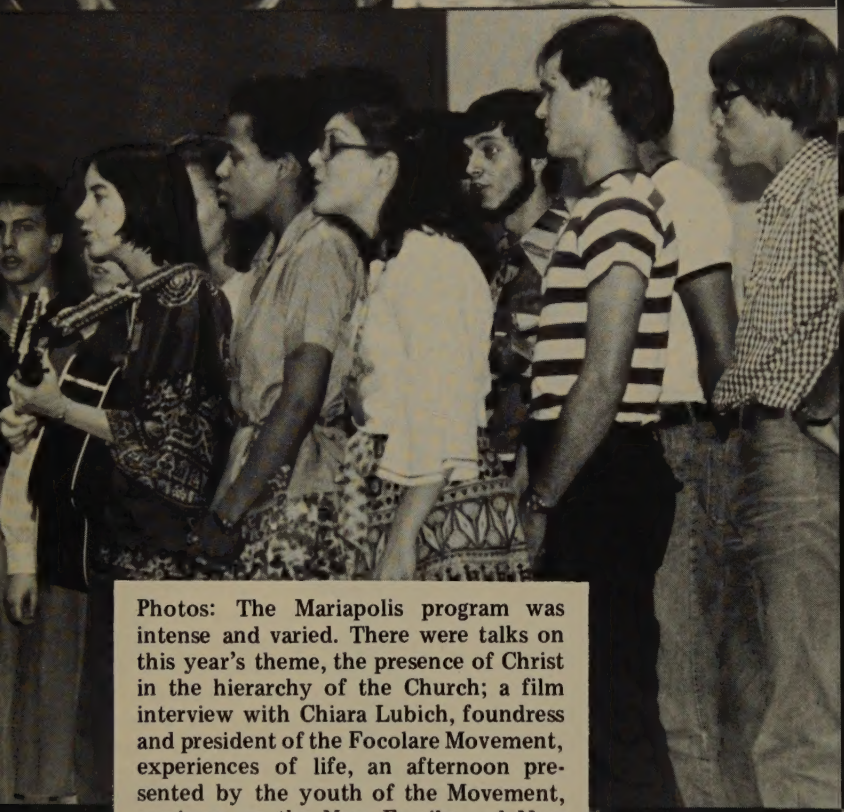
The Mariapolis is the summer convention of the Focolare Movement. It is geared to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according to the Gospel.

The 1978 Mariapolises for North America were three in number. The first took place in picturesque New Mexico from June 25th to July 1st at New Mexico Highlands University; the second was held at St. Martin's College in Lacey, Washington from July 23rd to July 29th and the third one, the biggest in size with more than 1,100 participants, at Alfred University in Alfred, New York from August 6th to the 12th.

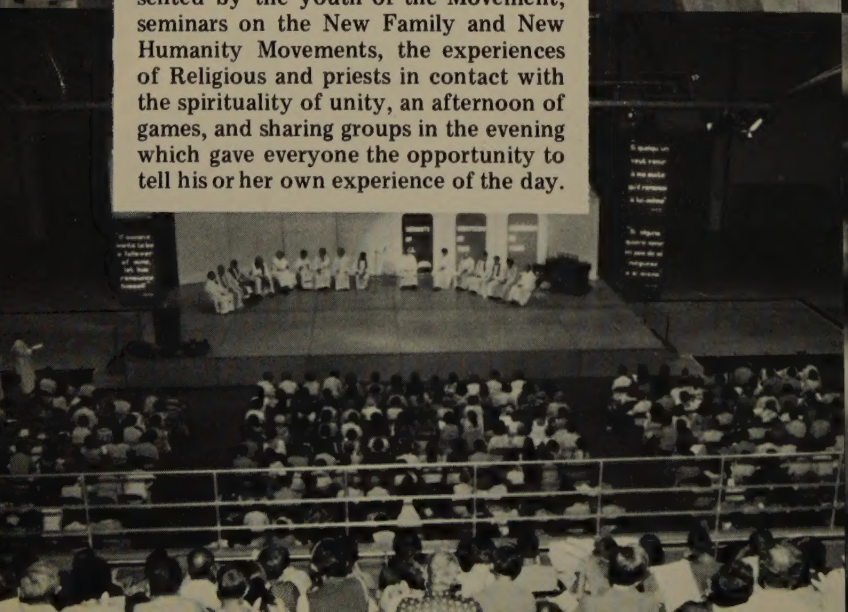
The theme of the Mariapolis this year dealt with the presence of Christ in the hierarchy of the Church. It was developed through four talks written by Chiara Lubich, the foundress of the Movement. They constituted a harmonious and unified whole, characterized by a warm and lively presentation, serious theological content, clarity of expression, and an all pervading love for the Church. Without getting bogged down in controversial theological questions — which however, were not overlooked — the talks went straight to the heart of the matter, with profound and vital argumentation, based on Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, Tradition, the documents of Vatican II and the pronouncements of Paul VI.

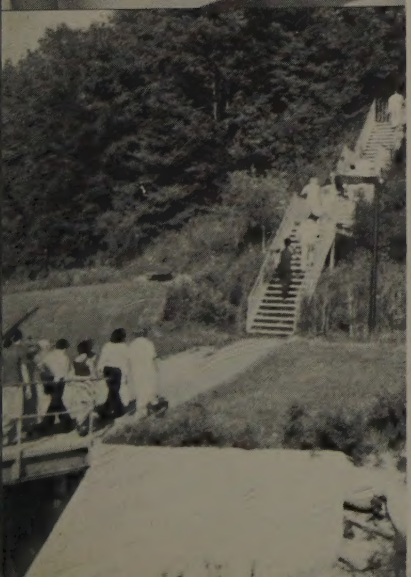
Many said at the end of the convention, "I never knew the Church was so beautiful."





Photos: The Mariapolis program was intense and varied. There were talks on this year's theme, the presence of Christ in the hierarchy of the Church; a film interview with Chiara Lubich, foundress and president of the Focolare Movement, experiences of life, an afternoon presented by the youth of the Movement, seminars on the New Family and New Humanity Movements, the experiences of Religious and priests in contact with the spirituality of unity, an afternoon of games, and sharing groups in the evening which gave everyone the opportunity to tell his or her own experience of the day.





The following is an excerpt from the book "Servants of all" by Chiara Lubich. The book contains the main talks of the Mariapolis.

The Church is not as beautiful as it could be! And we the faithful are to blame, for our lack of fidelity to the Church and to those who represent it: the Pope and the bishops.

But that passionate love for the Church which the Holy Father once spoke about must invade our hearts and help us to understand why the Church is not as it could be. Then our hearts will be filled with such enthusiasm, and our minds with such light, that we will be able to shake ourselves out of our apathy, and motivate ourselves and others to renew the Church, which now seems less beautiful due to the lack of love, the little faith, and the greatest ignorance of those who are baptized.

When, some time ago, I read some statements of Ignatius of Antioch, my heart jumped for joy. There I found words that only the Holy Spirit could have dictated. There I found the Church as it should be. Writing to the Ephesians Ignatius says:

> *Therefore it is fitting that you should live in harmony with the mind of the bishop, as indeed you do. For your rightly famous presbytery [council of presbyters (priests) around the bishop], worthy of God, is harmoniously united to the bishop as the strings to the harp. Therefore, by your accord and harmonious love you sing Jesus Christ (1).*

This is splendid! It seems like poetry, but instead it is simply an expression of the way the Church is meant to be. Someone might be tempted to interpret it superficially, but it is most profound. Just think: the faithful, and particularly the presbyters, are united to the bishop like the strings to the harp.

What does this mean? It means that in Ignatius' time, there was a much more vital awareness than there is now of who the bishop is: that the bishop — as Ignatius defines him — is the one who presides "in the place of God." Well then, how would the faithful who possess this faith behave toward the bishop? Just as they would behave if they were dealing with Jesus Christ himself: they would open their hearts and minds, and put aside their own interests and concerns, in order to hear and to receive what Jesus is telling them in the bishop. Then, inspired by Jesus, the bishop would open his mouth and — not finding any obstacles in his path, but only love — would express himself fully, with that wisdom which captivates us, spurs us on, and enables us to do great things.

Moreover, through the unity of the faithful with the bishop, as the strings to the harp, Christ would also be present in a new way, since he is there wherever two or more are united in his name. And this presence would give the words of the bishop further unction, light, persuasiveness and strength, so as to make all even more one in God. And through Christ present in the bishop and among them, all would "sing Jesus Christ"; that is, the reality of Christ would be mirrored in a living Church.

If then — since the Holy Spirit is given to all the faithful — someone feels that he has received some direction or inspiration from the Lord, and therefore has something he must tell the bishop, how should he go about it? Acting out of love and with detachment, he should give what he feels to the bishop; and Jesus in the bishop will then be able to speak freely, uttering words in harmony with what this person feels deep within him. The results will be a further confirmation of that Christian's faith that it is Christ who speaks in the bishop, and that by doing what the bishop says, one is doing what God wants.

But this is not the only thing Ignatius says; he adds:

> *And each one must become part of this choir, so that in perfect harmony, and taking your pitch from God in unison, you may sing one voice to the Father through Jesus Christ. Then he will both hear you and recognize by your good works that you are members of his Son. Therefore it is important that you always be in irreproachable unity, in order that you may always be in union with God (2).*

Certainly, in order for the Church to be as it should be, each member of the faithful must also "become part of this choir," and this is accomplished by living with the others in one accord of mind and heart. Then, presupposing that there is unity with the hierarchy, this fraternal unity brings about the presence of Jesus "where two or three are gathered" in his name. And since Jesus is there, the Church is there, as in the famous phrase of Tertullian: "Where three [are gathered...] even if they are lay people, there is the Church" (3). And in this way we can take our "pitch from God in unison," as Ignatius says, and "sing with one voice to the Father through Jesus Christ," who is there among all and in all.

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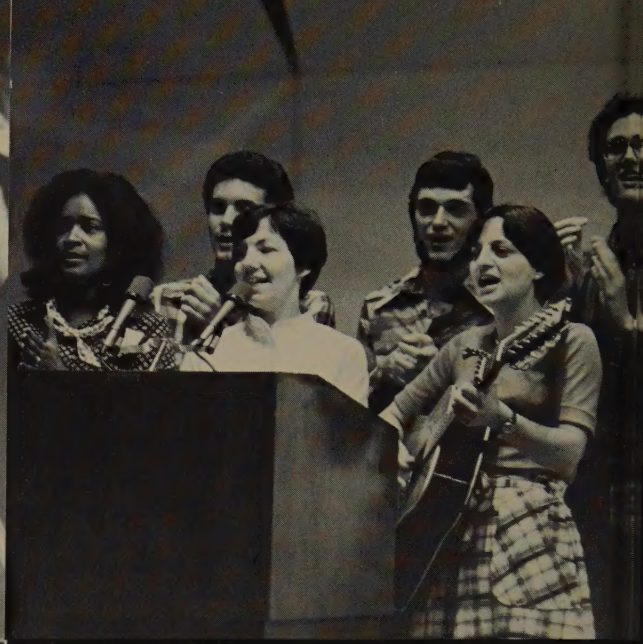
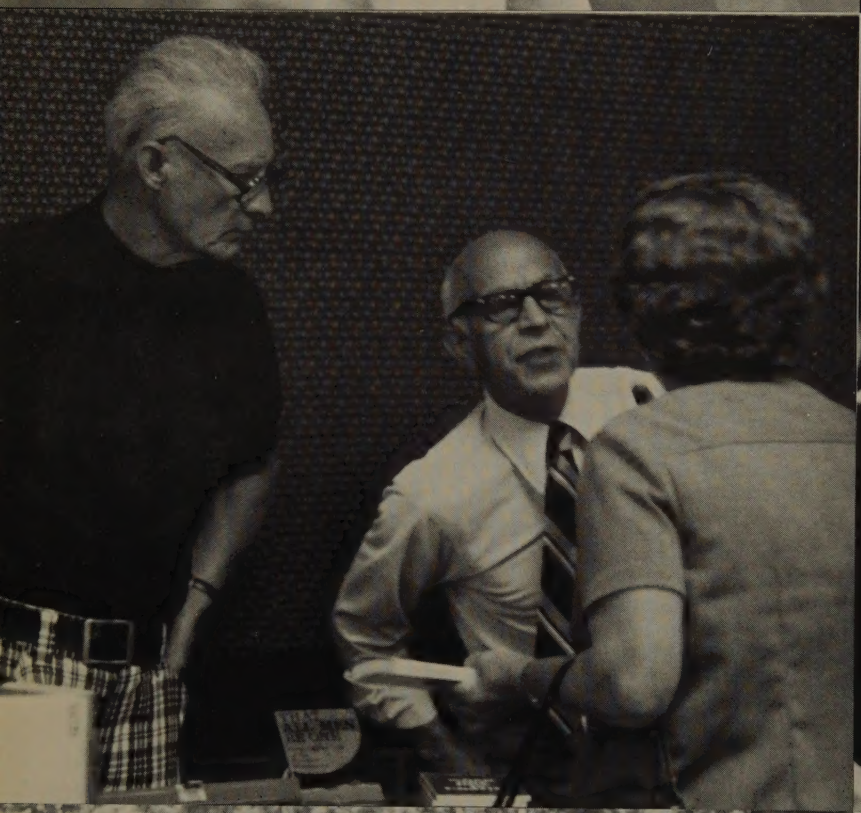
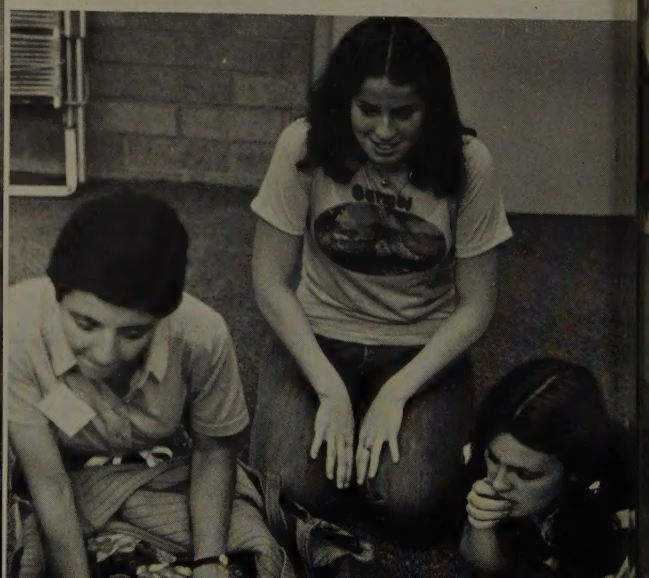
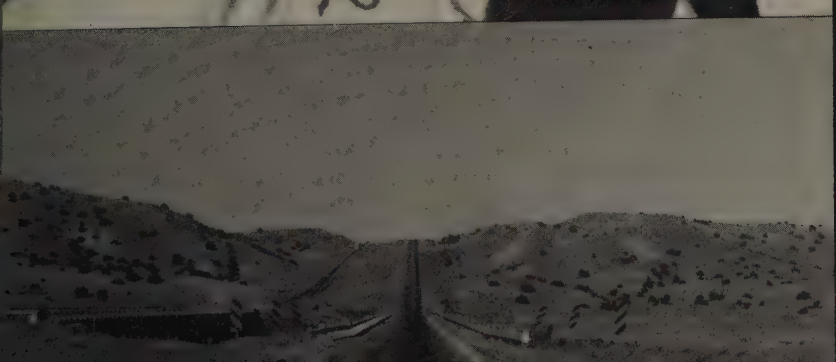
1. Ignatius "To the Ephesians" 4,1 (PG 5,648), ECF p.89.
2. "To the Ephesians" 4,2 (PG 5,648), ECF p.89.
3. Tertullian, "Exhortation on Chastity" 7 (PL 2,971).

Taken from "Servants of all" pages 115-119, published by New City Press, New York.









A participant in the Southwest Mariapolis, Sr. Bea Wagner from San Diego, California, summarized her experience as follows:

MARIAPOLIS — CITY OF MARY — my first thought was of all the cities in which I have lived and what I have loved about them. The beauty of San Diego's parks and beaches, the excitement of "Chicago's Loop," the adventures of Beirut's old quarters, the haunting nocturnal call to prayer from the mosques of Alexandria, the "Gemutlichkeit" of Milwaukee, the love of my family in the small Wisconsin town of St. Nazianz where I was born.

All these cities seem to be "more city" than the Mariapolis; they seem to have more permanence about them than a week in the summer. But the reverse appears to be true. San Diego's canyon hillsides are being levelled for new construction. Chicago's tallest building of a few years back has been surpassed by the Sears tower. The fascinating old native market of Beirut was destroyed in the Civil War. The school I attended as a child has been razed.

What each city offers I seem to have found here — intangible, perhaps, but more permanent than buildings or canyon hillsides, or spectacular sites.

The Mariapolis, City of Mary, offers all the excitement I have always relished — the adventure of walking with others who have their sights set on God, a beauty unsurpassed in the Eucharist, a friendship in Jesus which extends beyond "Gemutlichkeit," the excitement of learning of another's unshakeable confidence in Mary, new discoveries about authority in the Church, the love of a family with bonds much closer than my natural family. Above all, in this city, there is a presence - the presence of Jesus. That presence is real. That presence is one of the most fascinating discoveries of all my travels, and it keeps leading me to ever new surprises in this city of love.

Last year, with some reservations and skepticism, I went to my first Mariapolis. It was one of the unique experiences of my life and in some way or another, it has had an effect on everyday to this day. So this year I ran to the Mariapolis. The days have passed too quickly. I awoke this morning with a pang in my heart knowing that this was the last day in this city.

Now it is time to set our sights to the road, to begin our journey to another city taking this city, the City of Mary with us. It is time to set the world on fire with love, the love of Jesus. It is time to begin the divine adventure which knows no end, which surpasses all that we have seen, which will fascinate us forever.

"We are coming to you, we are coming, heart and soul filled with your joy...we are coming."

new!

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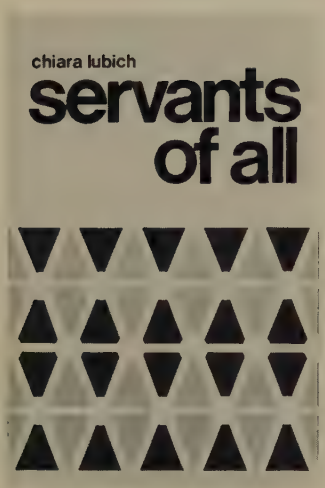

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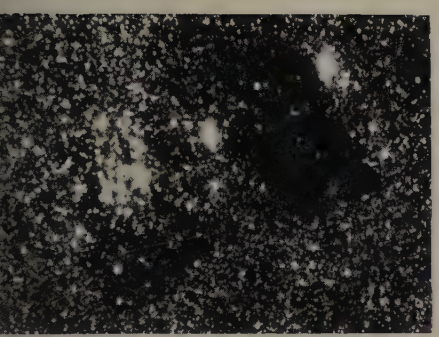


The variability of solar energy which, within the course of thousands of years has changed the climatic conditions of the Earth, is due to the great galactic cloud banks and to the internal variations in the sun's dynamism.

by Piero Pasolini

In the past one million years it has been noticed that on earth there are periodic decreases in temperature which cause terrible glaciations. These phenomena comprise vast regions, above all in the North and have a profound effect on the environment, leaving no doubt about the fact of their existence. Even very uninformed person remains stunned in seeing the shape of certain valleys of the Prealps, in Italy, as for example those which emerge on Lake Garda. The rocky lateral walls, with their round-shaped markings, and the piles of debris across the bottom of the valley, make one think that once in that valley there had to be an immense glacier which filled it and perhaps went over the tip of the rocky wall reaching other glaciers of adjacent valleys.

All throughout a vast part of the northern zone of the earth which goes from Canada to England, and from Scandinavia to Northern Siberia, there is evidence of numerous invasions of ice. Extensive research based on the ages of the various deposits brought about by floods, brings one to consider with certainty that, beginning from a little over a million years ago, there has been a succession of at least four principal glacial periods, each one lasting from one hundred to two hundred thousand years. Each time, immense curtains of ice of a depth of more than three thousand meters (about nine thousand feet) covered the northernmost parts of the continents, descending to low latitudes: in Europe, for instance, to the level of Berlin or Moscow and in America to the level of Chicago and New York.

The lower mountainous chains, as the Alps, the Caucasus and the Himalayas were literally covered with glaciers whose bottom flowed along the buried valleys till reaching further south on the plains. The Po River plains in Italy which borders with the Prealps is characterized by long series of hills called "Moreniches" which are none other than the debris deposited there by the immense glaciers. This debris was formed by the rubbing motion of the immense moving glaciers against the mountains. The Prealpine lakes, from Lake Maggiore to Lake Garda are all of glacial origin.

Even in the Southern hemisphere there have been contemporary glaciations. These lands, however, with the exception of Latin America, are distant from the South Pole and although they did experience a freezing period, they were not reached by the glaciers.

These glacial periods naturally do not occur according to a regular process. Within the more intense periods, slighter climatic changes are noticed, lasting a few thousand years and irregularly disbursed in time. Between one glacial period and another, one can verify phases of very warm climatic conditions, reaching even to the northern regions. Europe has had such periods where forests and tropical animals existed. The present period in which we are living represents the end of a great glaciation which had its peaks forty to sixty thousand years ago. Ten thousand years ago the glacial zone still covered south of Scandinavia and all of northern Russia. The residue is the great frozen sheet of Greenland, the Inlands and the great glacier of Vatnajokull in Iceland. There are reasons to believe that the mean temperature, though fluctuating for reasons we will soon see, will still rise in the next few thousand years bringing to the northern continents an almost tropical climate as it happened one hundred to one hundred fifty thousand years ago.

In addition to these great climatic variations which are fluctuating and irregular, perhaps due to cosmic causes, there are fluctuations of a much shorter span which may be due to the variability of the sun. This also regards decreases in mean temperature of three to four degrees which, because of the brevity of their duration (from fifty to seventy years), do not provoke a glaciation but are noticeably felt by living beings. These periods are documented in various historical testimonies. The most recent and better documented ones refer to the three centuries which preceded us. In these periods, a greater portion of European rivers would freeze in the winter. Chronicles of the nineteenth century speak of ice races that would normally take place in England on the Thames River which was completely frozen. These times stand out for the discomfort, sicknesses and death suffered especially among the poor.

These temperature decreases of about three or four degrees caused either by the great glaciations era or by the shorter periods of cold, are enough to completely upset the climate. The interval of mean temperature noticed in the terrestrial atmosphere corresponds more or less to the cycle which water undergoes when passing from the liquid state to the solid state (ice), or to the gaseous state (vapor). All that is needed is a decrease of a few degrees in temperature in order to globally increase the periods of solid states, leading as a consequence, to a general increase of ice. If the summer heat does not make it to melt away all the ice of the winter, then there is an accumulation of ice. If this occurs year after year, for centuries, the amount of ice increases to the point of covering immense northern regions and mountains.

What are the causes of these variations in temperature of long or short duration? Scientists are becoming more and more convinced that those of longer duration are due to cosmic causes and the others to swings in solar activity. By cosmic causes we mean the various situations in which the solar system finds itself in its motion in the interior of the galaxy. The galaxy to which we belong is a system which is extremely dynamic and in full evolution. It has to do with an ensemble composed of more than two hundred billion stars of various types and dimensions, the major portion of which are still immersed in enormous, even if tenuous, nebulae of gasses and dusts from which they were formed by means of condensation. One of these stars is the sun with its planets. This ensemble of matter, under the pull of gravitational forces has been, since the very beginning, in slow rotation around itself, taking the form of a flat disc. It can be seen at night by looking at the narrow strip of the milky way which is none other than the galaxy seen from the inside. If we could have a front view of this disc, it would look like a kind of pinwheel with its luminous arms folded like a spiral around a large nucleus that is much more brilliant.

Extensive studies made of our galaxy and also of other close-by galaxies which are similar to ours, have revealed that the matter is in different positions according to where it is found — near the center or near the periphery of the large disc. The stars which constitute the zone of the nucleus are old enough and close enough to each other. The distance between them consisted of only a few light years and the spaces between them are free of nebulae. The peripheric spiral arms instead are generally made up of younger stars still immersed in immense nebulae of gasses and dust which have generated them. These nebulae absorb some radiation emitted by the stars and this absorption can be noticed on the photographs by observing the light — dark spots which characterize the peripheric zones of the galaxies.

We, with the sun, are in one of the peripheric arms of the galaxy, about half way between the center and the periphery. We distance about thirty to forty thousand light years from the center. The entire galactic system rotates its long arms around itself as a spiral. The period of rotation is very different between the periphery and the center. In the zone where we are located, the time it takes for a complete rotation around the center is about two hundred and fifty million years. This rotation is not regular as the one of a planet around the sun. Each time we make the round of the galaxy, we undergo a reshuffling with the stars and nebulae with which we are mixed. It is these situations that can influence the terrestrial climate. The sun, while mixing in with other swarms of stars on the inside of the nebulae, could pass from zones where the nebulae are less dense to zones where they are more dense. The difference in density is infinitesimal, but sufficient to produce slight variations in the absorption of solar energy, thereby causing a three to four degree change in temperature; enough to bring the earth from a tropical climate to a glacial one, as was explained above.

Studies which have been made on glaciations seem to confirm that they have repeated themselves (lasting for a few million years), each two hundred to three hundred million years, which is exactly once for each revolution of the galaxy. In this rotation the solar system passes from a less dense to a more dense area of nebulae. The irregularity of the nebulae, in turn, causes the various fluctuations during the same glacial period.

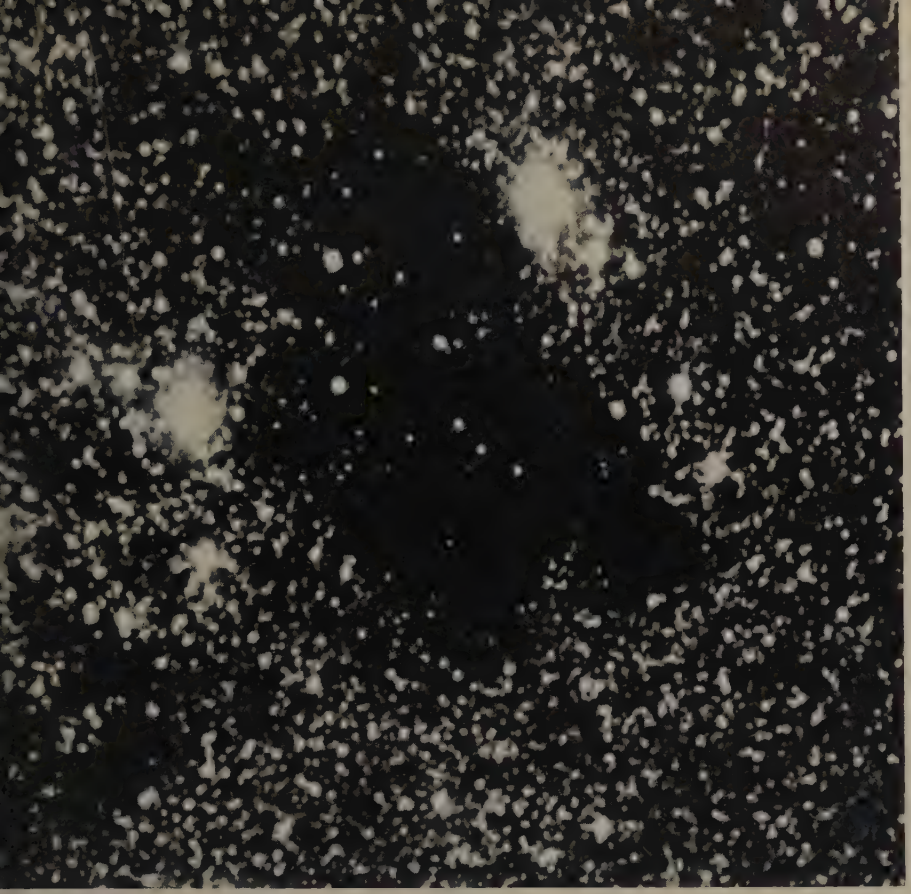
Regarding the smaller "eras of cold temperature" — the ones lasting from forty to seventy years — there is more convincing evidence that they occurred from variations in the internal dynamics of the sun. The sun appears to be a stable enough star. It seems a miracle that a nuclear explosion which lasts billions of years could maintain such consistency to allow the mean temperature of our planet to oscillate only a few degrees every so often during the centuries. The themostatic balance of life on earth is so delicate that all it takes to upset it quite a bit are those few degrees, as it is with those larger glaciations.

Right: An obscure nebula situated in a "spiral arm" of the galaxy. When the sun (which could be one of the many stars visible in the photograph) finds itself inside a nebula like this, its energy is slightly absorbed and a glacial period takes place on earth.

Bottom right: Since a little less than a million years ago there have been at least four principal glacial periods each one lasting from 100 to 200 thousand years. Each time, immense sheets of ice, often more than three thousand meters long, have covered the northern section of the continents, descending to rather low latitudes, for example in Europe, as far south as Berlin and Moscow, and in America as far as Chicago and New York.

In the past centuries, American astronomers have tried to keep statistics gathering together both astronomical and meteorological data and fluctuations. They have reached the understanding that the solar activity had had noticeable fluctuations to which climactic variations have corresponded. One of the most evident symptoms of these solar activities are the spots. The abundance of spots signifies an increase in nuclear reaction; therefore, an increase in the energy being emitted. From other observations by astronomers of past centuries, it has been learned that there were long periods where solar spots were absent. (For example, from 1100 to 1250, 1460 to 1550, 1645 to 1715, etc.) During these periods there was a slight decrease in temperature.

It may seem strange, but observance of solar spots by the naked eye has been very accurate even during the centuries before the use of the telescope. Information to the effect is found especially in the Orient, where solar spots had a particular significance. Another phenomenon closely connected to the solar spots and also registered in chronicles of many



variations that have occurred during past centuries. One can more or less establish the precise periods when there have been noticeable variations in climate.

Unfortunately these solar variations do not follow a regular pattern. The only things that are regular in the sun are its rotation and the well known eleven year cycle which has a minimum influence on climate. Therefore, it is difficult to predict when there may be a change in the climate. A temperature decrease can be expected to occur within a period of between fifty and seventy years. At one time, this decrease in temperature would have had adverse effects on many populations. Today, its effects may be less detrimental. However, because of the energy crisis, a general decrease in winter temperature if it lasted for about ten consecutive years, could create serious problems even for the more advanced nations. The worst consequences are those which regard agriculture. The change of climate in regions which produce cereals, for instance, could reduce the crop to less than half. It is easy to imagine the repercussions this could have on a world which is steadily becoming more populated and more demanding.

astronomers and writers of the past, is the aurora borealis. In the absence of the spots, and therefore with reduced solar activity, the aurora borealis is not registered.

Another type of solar activity being registered is imprinted in trees. Plants live by absorbing carbon dioxide from the air. In the atmosphere many atoms of carbon dioxide are transformed into atoms of carbon isotope 14 when they are hit by cosmic rays. The downfall of cosmic rays is more or less intense, depending if they are more or less dispersed around the earth by magnetic phenomena that occur in the surrounding space. These phenomena are strongly connected to the solar activity. On examining the various rings of century old, or even older trees, and measuring the percentage of carbon 14 that is present therein, one can evaluate the solar activity in the years which correspond to those rings.

From this data there can also be extracted information concerning solar

These phenomena have to be kept in mind as having a bearing on future projects. They concern problems which could only be resolved on a world-wide scale and which presuppose an agreement and a tight link among nations. Even under this aspect, nature urges humanity to look for an efficacious way to unite, in a unique organization, working towards an equal distribution of goods among all. ●

Light

Alone,
before an immense light.

I would like to run toward it,
to have it permeate every fiber
and to fill my soul,
to lose myself there, in its radiant splendor.

But,
I am so small — this light is overwhelming.

I stretch out my arms to contain it —
yet I cannot grasp it.

I gaze at it with my eyes
but cannot hold it there.

Around me there is only darkness —
an aching emptiness inside.

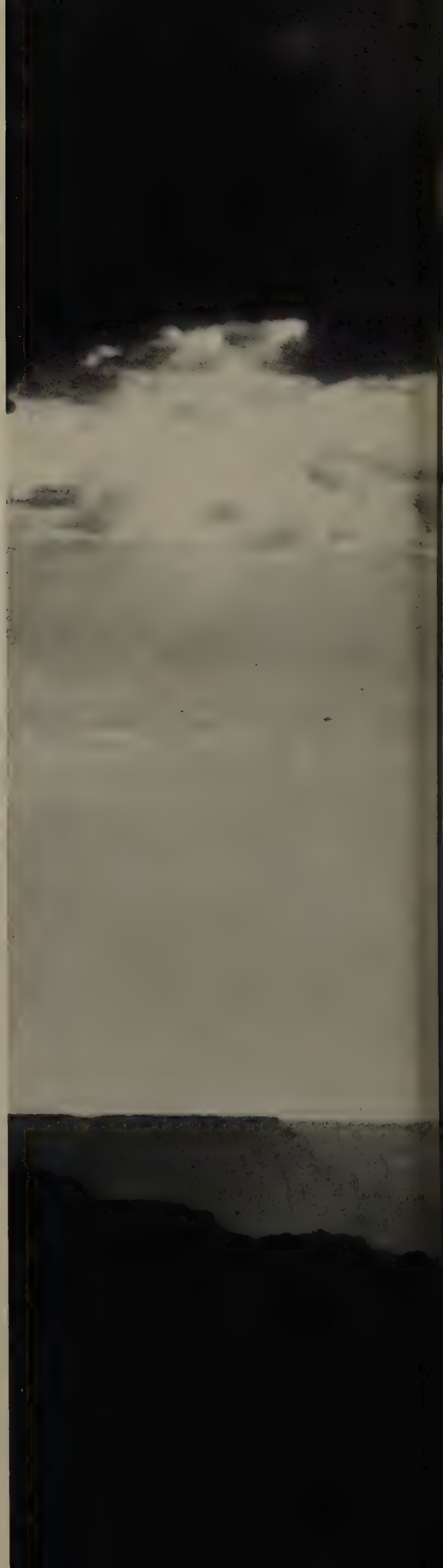
The light ahead is luminous,
but I cannot see the way. . .

And I say yes —
to all the darkness,
because hidden there is the light.

Racing ahead, though in darkness,
the light — so immense — now fills my soul.

Thank you for every darkness
because there I find love.

Debbie



Ecumenism

Ecumenical meeting at the Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa

by John Bossi

The theme of the convention was the Eucharist. It was developed through a talk given by the Anglican bishop Ronald Goodchild on the Eucharist in the Anglican tradition, another one by Pastor Edwin Robertson on Communion in the Baptist tradition, and three conversations by Chiara Lubich, foundress of the Focolare Movement, on the Eucharist in the Catholic perspective. The participants were 150 in all. Among them were four Anglican bishops, 23 ministers and many lay people of the Church of England: Methodists, Baptists, German Lutherans, Swedish Lutherans, Dutch Reformed and Catholics.

The convention, promoted by the "Centro Uno" (1) of the Focolare Movement, took place at the Mariapolis Center of Rocca di Papa near Rome, for a full week, from Monday, March 27 to Sunday April 2, 1978.

Among the highlights was the meeting of the Anglican bishops with Pope Paul VI at the papal audience on Wednesday March 29.

Also of great interest was a visit to the catacombs of Domitilla, where an Anglican mass was celebrated; a dinner of the four Anglican bishops with Archbishop Augustine Mayer, Secretary of the Congregation of the Religious, and visit with Bishop Ablondi, the President of the Commission for Ecumenism within the Italian Bishops' Conference, during a trip to the international mini-city of Loppiano.

At Rocca di Papa Father Stjepan Schmidt, from the Secretariat for Christian Unity, gave a panoramic report on the work accomplished by this very active department of the Holy See. Rev. Furst, a Lutheran pastor, and his wife spoke about their experience in Ottmaring, the small city where groups of Catholics of the Focolare Movement and groups of Lutherans of the Bruderschaften (2) live together and give witness to mutual charity. There were also several meetings in groups with personal experiences of Christian life.

The program included an in depth insight into the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, information on its various aspects and a documentation on some of its ecumenical initiatives, among which was the recent visit of Chiara Lubich to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. All of this contributed to a fuller realization, on the part of the participants, of the existence of a spiritual ecumenism greatly incisive and finding its place within the more general context of ecumenical dialogue.

The Anglican bishops present told us

Four Anglican bishops took part in the convention at Rocca di Papa. They were Bishop Ronald Goodchild, Bishop of Kensington (London), Bishop Mark Wood, Auxiliary Bishop of Hereford, Bishop William Baker, Auxiliary Bishop of Liverpool and Bishop Clifford Bishop. The warm and brotherly relationship with the Anglican ministers and lay people as well as their exceptional spirit of service helped to create a wonderful atmosphere throughout the meeting.

We asked Bishop Ronald Goodchild what interested him most in the Focolare Movement. "The spirituality," he replied. "It is a spirituality that is accessible to all, that is flexible, that can be practiced by everybody. And then I am very much interested in its ecumenical spirit. I've been involved with ecumenism for 25 years. I wanted to have contact with a movement for unity that came from Rome. In general, when we meet to discuss the relationships between Churches, we place the greatest emphasis

on theological differences, the question of authority or on the Eucharist. What struck me the most in the Focolare Movement is that here they start from the other end. Here they emphasize the people who are seen as children of God. They start out from the love of Jesus for everyone. This creates an atmosphere in which it is easier to talk of the differences as well. Then, I found a spontaneous spark of joy in the persons committed to the Movement — when we live with them for some time, we realize that it is not an artificial joy."

Bishop William Baker of Liverpool told us, "This meeting has been a joy for me — every moment of it. I have attended many other meetings which were organized in a 'military' fashion from beginning to end. Here, everything

as organized in an atmosphere of free-
om and spontaneity. I am returning to
ngland enormously enriched."

he encounter with Paul VI

During the convention, the four
nglican bishops had a meeting with
aul VI on the occasion of the general
udience of Wednesday March 29th in
ervi Hall. "There is an ecumenical
oup from England, Wales, Scotland
nd Ireland with their bishops and min-
ters," announced the speaker in English
nd already in his official address in
alian, Paul VI had said, "Shall we not
ve even more our brothers (whose
ustrious representatives are here with
s), these brothers who are still sepa-
ted from us in the wish and hope of

aving them united with us in the fulness
f truth and grace?" Immediately after
he English synthesis of his speech to all,
he Pope addressed the following special
reeting to the groups: "We extend a
ordial Easter welcome to the ecumeni-
al group from the Mariapolis Center.
Ve believe, brethren, in the immense
ower that flows perennially from the
Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We be-
eve that this power can bring forth
ruitful and conclusive results in uniting
he Christian churches in the full unity
f faith, in the full charity of truth.
Vith love and respect and with great
eartfelt hope, we say to all of you, in
he name of the risen Christ, Peace be
ith you."

At the end of the audience Paul VI
poke personally with each of the four

Left: The Anglican bishops who participated in the convention at the Mariapolis Center. From left to right: William Baker, Auxiliary Bishop of Liverpool; Mark Wood, Auxiliary Bishop of Hereford; Clifford Bishop (Retired); and Ronald Goodchild, Bishop of Kensington (London).
Above: A view of the meeting hall of the Mariapolis Center at Rocca di Papa, Italy.

Bishop Goodchild on Vatican Radio

Vatican Radio: Among those present at the General audience this morning was the Anglican bishop of Kensington, the Most Reverend Ronald Frederick Osborne Goodchild, who spoke to the Vatican Radio on the perspective of the unity of the Church.

Bishop Goodchild: I think that in the present moment in the Church of England we are deeply aware of the approaches which are being made by the Church in Rome as well as in England to create a new unity between our two Churches. A recent report by the Liturgical Commision of the Anglican Church, and by the Church in Rome on the Eucharist and on Authority, showed that an enormous step ahead has been taken in this direction. We feel strongly the urgency of the problem of unity in the Christian Church today. We must be men of the Church but we must also be Christians. In England today there is a strong movement towards unity among the Churches. Through the Focolare Movement however, I discovered that this unity embraces the Church of Rome and the Church of Rome embraces the other communions. This seems to me to be an enormous step in the right direction.

Left: Rev. Edwin Robertson, Baptist Minister of Westbourne Park, England, is a well known writer and journalist. At the convention he spoke on communion in the Baptist tradition. He is the author of a biography of Chiara Lubich, foundress of the Focolare Movement. Rev. Robertson met Chiara Lubich when she was awarded the Templeton Foundation Prize in 1977.

Below: A sharing group of Anglicans and people of other Christian Churches during the convention.

Anglican bishops. "I expected that the experience of meeting the Holy Father would be like meeting a very remote personality, since he is the head of the Catholic Church. But when we came in for the audience I was impressed by his humility and his sanctity," commented one of them, Bishop Goodchild. "While he was greeting the various groups in the great audience hall, he really made an effort to make himself one with each group. His blessing was not an 'official' one."

Asked about their conversation, Bishop Clifford Bishop said, "He asked me what my See was, and told us all that he was very fond of the Anglican Church and that he prayed for it. Then he went on to greet the others and on his way back said to us all, 'Don't forget to pray for unity. Don't forget tp pray for unity.' He then gave each one of us a medallion to remind us of our meeting together. I was deeply moved by his gentleness and love." ●

(1) The "Centro Uno" is a central office for the ecumenical activities of the Movement.
(2) Bruderschaften — a brotherhood dedicated to Christian unity.

have found my mother

Soon after my birth in the city of S., e moved to a farm near a small town. here I spent my early years, until the ge of six.

Then, with a shock, I learned that I as a foster child, that the woman hom I had understood to be my iother, was not. She told my sister and ie, "You will have to leave; you are ot really my children. I'm sick and not ble to care for you any longer."

That moment stands out so clearly i my memory. I couldn't believe what iis woman was telling us. My only iought was that I had to find my own iother. Although our foster mother ent on telling us many things, I didn't ear another word. I couldn't cry, I ouldn't do anything except stare at her. latred was welling up inside me, as I iought that she had lied to me all iose years.

From then on, my sister and I began series of moves from one foster home another. These were very unhappy ears for us. Some of the families we ved with didn't show us much affec- on. I remember many times being ungry because we were only allowed eat a specified amount of food. I ept asking myself, "How could our iother have left us?"

When I was ten or eleven years old, y sister and I moved back to the farm ith our original foster mother, as her ealth had improved enough for her to ke us back again. There I lived for ie next four years, carrying constantly my heart the dream of finding my iother, waiting for the day when I ould be eighteen and free to go in earch of her. Meanwhile, there was othing I could do.

At the age of fourteen, I went to a boarding school where I spent the next two years. From there I went to live with another family, and I stayed with them until my graduation from high school.

On my eighteenth birthday, I really celebrated (secretly, within myself) because at last I was free, free to do what I wanted. I could begin my search. Meanwhile my sister had moved back to S. I wrote to her, asking if she could look for our mother there, since we knew that we had been born in that city. We learned that our mother had moved to the South. I started working and saving to buy a car, so that I would be able to travel without restriction. I would then be free, and perhaps I would find the peace that I longed for. Since I had been unhappy all my life, I thought that the moment was finally coming when I would find happiness.

In the meantime, my sister had been asking me to move to S., and in 1966, after five years, I went to live with her. My plan was to work there long enough to save what I would need to move South, and there to begin my search in earnest. But after two years something happened to change all my plans.

For some time I hadn't been going to church. When I was younger, around fourteen, I had had a crisis in my life. I remember running into a church and kneeling down. Looking at the tabernacle I had said, " God, they tell me you are all good and that you are all knowing; if you're so good, I need your help now." Then, a second later, I said, "No, I don't need you." I walked out of the church, deciding that I would make my life on my own, without his help. And for years that's what I had done. If there really was a God, I reasoned, all of the unhappiness that I had always found around me would not exist.

Then one day, I met someone who seemed to care about me in a way I had never before felt. She had patience with me and with all of my problems. When she asked me about myself, I felt that she was truly interested rather than just asking out of politeness. She was happy, and yet I could tell that she understood my suffering as if she was experiencing it herself. She seemed like someone who had found what she was looking for. And I wanted to know what it was.

This new friend of mine didn't speak much about God, but somehow her life led me to return to him. For I discovered that in her life, what she had that I didn't have was God.

One morning about a year after I met this friend, I woke up at 5:30. For some reason which I didn't understand, I had an intense desire to go into a church again. I went to a small chapel, and I remember kneeling in front of the tabernacle and saying, "It's been many years since I left you. I don't know if I can love you now, but I'll try."

Immediately I was filled with peace and joy. In the years that have passed, I've never forgotten the few minutes I spent there. I did not mention this incident to my friend, since I felt that it was something just between God and myself. Some time later, I felt the desire to go to Mass and receive the Eucharist. This changed my whole life, my whole way of thinking. I understood that I had to get rid of the hatred that I had carried inside myself all those years.

In the meantime, my friend introduced me to many other people who shared her same ideas. She lived with some other girls, and I started visiting them often. What struck me most was the fact that they all seemed to have the same sincere love as my friend. I surprised them a few times by visiting them unexpectedly, to see if they would have the same attitude when they were not prepared for my visit. And they did, even when it meant for them to put everything aside to meet me. I became convinced that it was something that they tried to do always. One evening when I arrived, I found them painting the house. They asked me if I would like to help, and I said yes. We worked hard, but in that atmosphere it was so refreshing that I didn't feel tired.

After a few months, they told me their secret: they loved Jesus. They believed that he was in every person, and they acted accordingly.

Upon hearing that, I decided to try to apply their ideas to my own life. I tried to love my sister at home by shortening or lengthening her skirts, by doing the dishes or by cooking the dinner. At the office, I started with one particular woman who was very difficult for me to get along with. We were both bookkeepers, and we made out payrolls and payroll checks. We each had a different system for calculating them, and the results never seemed to coincide. Now, I was determined to change my old way. At any rate, I wanted to see if it would work.

The next day, when she walked in to work, she had to pass by in front of me, because I had the sign-in sheets. I took that opportunity to say good morning, but she just looked at me and said nothing. I thought, "Well, I tried once; I'll try again tomorrow morning." The next morning I greeted her again, and again she looked at me in silence. I told myself that I would try once more, and if it did not work then, I would give up. The third day came, and I said "Good morning." This time she responded "Hi!" It was such a joy to see that this method did work, that I kept searching for new ways of loving her. If she dropped her pencil, I picked it up. I tried to calculate the payroll by her method. I tried to do everything with the attitude that I was doing it for Jesus in her, not looking at our personality clash. Little did she know that I was doing all of this for him!

We became friends. I remember one morning, it must have been about a month later, when I thought I would try not greeting her in the morning and see what happened. So, when she came into the office. I didn't say a word. That afternoon she came to ask me if there was something wrong. It was a good lesson for me, and I realized that I couldn't go back to my old way. It would have been like stealing from my brothers.

In these ways my new life began. Ever since, I have found the fulfillment of my life in God. I'm going to put him in first place always. I find that the more I try to be empty to love the others for him, the more I find myself fulfilled, and when I don't do it, I find an emptiness that tells me that I have to start again.

Recently, someone asked me about my mother. How did the search go? Did I ever find her? I told her that I still had all of the papers from writing all over to try to find her, and that I would continue the search, but that my heart had changed. I don't feel that I am an orphan any longer. In meeting Jesus, I also met Mary, my mother, *the* mother.

L. O.

ét, man of action, Raoul Follereau was one of the most lucid minds our time. He dug beneath leprosy and there he found legalized ıstice, selfishness and cowardice.

Father of lepers

Mila Romagnoli
d Maurus Green

For several years now, Leper's Day been kept in one hundred and enty seven nations at the end of ıuary. This year was no exception. enty five years ago, Raoul Follereau ıceived Leper's Day and persuaded e United Nations Organization to in- ute it. The day after his death on cember 6, 1977, some important ers wrote a few lines of praise and evision had some words to say about n. At his funeral the few "personal- es" were in contrast to hundreds of ends, especially young friends. With couple of compliments, an uncomfort- le personality had been liquidated.

Throughout his life he did nothing t proclaim to everyone, especially men power, this country's urgent need of n irresistable impetus of love." llereau is known as the "Father of pers"; he has indeed struggled for ty years to conquer this disease, to ve those "guilty" of leprosy accepted men and cured. But this beautiful le "Father of Lepers" has its limita- ns. Follereau was much more than at. Poet, man of action, he was one the most lucid minds of our time. He g beneath leprosy and there he found galized injustice, selfishness and wardice.

In a lecture to the Sorbonne in 1967 said, "Why so much injustice, absur- ty, cruelty? Why has the century of e atom become so soon the century of e atomic bomb? Because love has de- rted the world. Because for too many bmissive or drugged minds, love has come a word devoid of meaning, a dicrous relic of the past, a subtlety, nost an annoyance."

And love has been the dominant mo- e of his life. He began life as a dra- atist; when he was twenty he was al- ady known (he was born at Nevers in ance in 1903); some of his plays were

Above: Raoul Follereau, "Father of Lepers."
Below: Raoul Follereau with his wife Madeleine who shared his struggle to help the most abandoned. Follereau died December 6, 1977.

given over one thousand performances. His meeting with lepers when he was twenty five gave a new direction to his life which was already that of a committed Christian.

Gradually, he prompted initiatives to fight the egoism of the "haves" and the powerful, and the cowardice of "those who eat three meals a day and imagine that the rest of the world does the same."

He often wrote to heads of states. In 1944 he asked President Roosevelt: "When will the armistice sound so that all the belligerents may donate, as a work of peace, what one day of this accursed war has cost them?"

In 1954 he wrote to the Presidents of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.: "Give up one of your bombers and we shall be able to cure all the lepers in the world."

In 1955, 1959 and 1962 he returned to his appeals to the leaders: "Atomic bomb or charity"; "Love one another or disappear; there is no other choice open to you"; "If you continue to arm you are dead."

In 1964 he wrote to the then President U Thant to ask "that all the nations present at the U.N. decide each year, on the occasion of a day of peace, to withdraw from their budgets what a day's armaments cost them and put it in common to fight famine, slums and the endemic diseases which decimate mankind."

This appeal was supported by three million young people from every country, who sent their signatures to the U. N. In 1969 this petition was approved by the United Nations with ninety-two votes in favor and seven abstentions.

Between 1920 and today, Follereau wrote more than forty books and pamphlets. His most important work bears the significant title "The only truth is to love one another." His most widespread, "The book of love," has been translated into twenty-nine languages in eight million copies.

For "the most suffering and oppressed minority in the world," the lepers, Follereau has founded societies in many countries, has gone around the world thirty-two times, and has encountered every kind of suffering, poverty and exploitation.

Faced with all this, "What is to be done?" he wrote, "Revolution. Where? Within ourselves. How? With love."

In "If Christ tomorrow ... " he writes "It's not a question of vaguely drying a tear, that's soon done.

"Nor even having a little love:-That's too easy.

"It's a matter of waking up and never being content again ...

"Of never being content again to look around at what we possess, satisfied with our little portion of paradise.

"It's a question of refusing to continue our gentle, respectable siesta, when everyone is howling with despair around us.

"Of no longer accepting this form of existence which is a perpetual denial of man.

"Of no longer accepting a negative Christianity which the heavenly Middle Class suffocate in a labyrinth of formula and prohibitions.

"No longer accepting to be happy on one's own.

"In the face of poverty, injustice, cowardice, never give up, never com-

I NAME YOU UNIVERSAL HEIR

Young men of the whole world,
either war or peace belongs to you.
Twenty-five years ago, I wrote,
"Either men will learn
to love each other,
Either, in short, man will live for man,
or men will die.
All
and all together.
Our world has only this alternative:
to love or to disappear.
We need to choose. At once.
And forever."
Yesterday, the alarm.
Tomorrow, hell.
The Great — those giants who have ceased to be men — possess in their foul death collections
20,000 hydrogen bombs,
of which one alone is enough to transform a metropolis into an immense cemetery.
And these men continue their monstrous industry,
producing three bombs every twenty-four hours.
The Apocalypse is at the street corner.
Boys and girls of the entire world, it will be your task to say "No" to the suicide of mankind.
"Lord, I long to live to help others to live."
That was my prayer as an adolescent. I believe I have remained faithful to it all my life.
And here I am in the twilight of an existence which I have led as best I could, but which remains incomplete.
The Treasure I leave you is the good I have not done, which I would like to have done and which you will do after me.
If only this witness could help you to love.
This is the last ambition of my life, and the purpose of this "testament."
I proclaim the youth of the world Universal Heir.
All the youth of the world: of the right, the left, the center, the extremists: what does it matter!
All the youth, those who have received the gift of faith, those who behave as if they believed, and those who imagine they don't believe.
There is only one heaven for the whole world.
The closer I draw to the end of my life the more I feel the need to repeat to you: it is in loving that we shall save mankind.
And to repeat to you: the greatest misfortune that can befall you is that of being no use to anyone and that your life serves for nothing.

Left: Raoul Follereau in Florence, Italy during a demonstration for peace, and against hunger in the world. With him is Helder Camara, bishop of Recife, Brazil.

promise, never draw back. Struggle. Fight. Into the attack! Stop those responsible from sleeping.

"You who belong to tomorrow, demand happiness for others, build the happiness of others.

"The world is hungry for bread and tenderness.

"Let's get to work." ●

ve or disappear.
ut it's not enough to hymn
Peace, peace," so that Peace may
op deserting the earth.
ou must act. By force of love.
ith blows of love.
cifists with clubs are false fighters.
the attempt to conquer,
ey run away.
rist has repudiated violence,
cepting the cross.
un the rogues of the intellect as
u would the sellers of smoke:
ey will lead you along desert
ads leading nowhere.
o not trust those "divinized
chniques" which St. Paul has
ready condemned.
arn to distinguish what is useful
om what makes you slaves.
enounce long words. The more
gh sounding, the emptier
ey are.
ou won't heal the world with
clamation marks.
he real need is to set it free from
rtain kinds of "progress" and
diseases, its money and its curses.
epart from men for whom bank
tes resolve, explain and evaluate
erything. Even if they are
telligent, they are the most
upid of all.
ou can't make a springboard
ut of a safe.
ou will have to dominate the
power of money, money which
corrupts everything; otherwise
nothing human will be possible.
Corrupters — become servants.
Be rich with the happiness
of others.
Be true to yourselves.
And to no one else.
It doesn't matter who.
Shun the facile cowardice
of remaining anonymous.
Every human being has his destiny.
Achieve yours, with your eyes open,
demanding and loyal.
Nothing ever diminishes the
dimensions of man. If you lack
something in life, it is because you
have not looked high enough.
All alike? No.
But all equal, and all together!
Then you will be men. Free men.
But beware! Liberty cannot be
exploited with impunity.
It is not a screen behind which
foul ambitions can flourish.
Liberty is the common inheritance
of all mankind.
Anyone who is incapable of passing
it on to others, is unworthy
of possessing it.
Don't transform your hearts into
a store room, it would soon
become a dustbin.
WORK! One of the misfortunes
of our times is to look on work
as a curse. Whereas it is
redemption.
You must merit the happiness of
loving your duty. And then, believe
in goodness, in humble and sublime
goodness.
In the heart of every man there are
treasures of love.
It's up to you to discover them.
The unique truth is to love each
other.
Love one another, love all.
Not at fixed times, but for the
whole of life.
Love the poor, love the happy
(who are often the poor). Love
the stranger, love the neighbor who
is a drop-out, love the foreigner
living near you.
LOVE. You will pacify men
only by enriching their hearts.
Witnesses too often chained to the
deterioration of this century
(which for a while was so beautiful),
terrified of this gigantic race
towards death, of those who steal
our destinies, asphyxiated by a
dazzling, devouring and paralyzing
"progress"; with hearts shattered
by this cry, "I'm hungry!" which
rises ceaselessly from two thirds
of the world; there remains only this
remedy: BE TRULY BROTHERS.
Then . . . tomorrow?
Tomorrow, there's you.

Raoul Follereau

FAMILY LIFE

A whole new family

Weakened family life is one of the greatest social ills of our time.
The "New Family" Movement has as its aim to bring the Focolare spirit of unity into family life, so that each family will be deeply united within itself and with other families.

You marry and two of you become one. You lose yourself, the "I" becomes "we". No longer is it my car, my room, my apartment, my day off to do with as I please. It can be a very painful adjustment to something very real or it can be the most exciting and continuing experience of my life. It depends on me.

But that fusion must take place in order to have a meaningful life together. I must bring to that union all that I have, all that I am and all that I ever will be, freely, openly, in deep faith and trust, first of all in God, and then in each other, constantly presenting myself as gift to the other, hoping and praying that nothing will ever close me off from the blooming of this relationship which can only happen through communication. When two people are willing to risk genuine self-disclosure, love grows. We really put ourselves on the line in telling another who we really are before God, before being ready to give everything without expecting anything. There is a risk in this, but without the heart taking this risk, there can be no real encounter.

However, into this kind of relationship children can be born in security and love and a sense of belonging. When I held that first precious little gift in my arms and realized with what perfection God had formed the sweet softness of this life in my hands, and we had helped Him create - this product of His intense love for us and of our love for each other - well, there are no words between husband and wife that could possibly express the love and the feeling of wholeness, which deepens with each succeeding birth. You feel as though you might burst.

But then come the diapers to wash, the nights when you don't get your rest and sometimes two or three are all ill at once, and there are visits to the doctor, broken bones, needles, and cavities to be filled, and bills to pay and we'd wonder, "Will these days ever be behind us?" But you learn to trust in God and carry on, and while there still are little ones, the older ones are beginning to grow up, and loyalty becomes something they have more for the peer group than for parents. Now you are really torn between wanting to hold on, and knowing that you have to let go. I never felt prepared for it and kept thinking the next one would be different, and so each time I would go through the same wrenching experience, which of course is a very natural part of motherhood.

It's about eight years since I had the opportunity to make a "cursillo." But husbands were to go first and so I resorted to faith in prayer; since I wanted to go, I had to get him there first. Not a word was said to him directly, however when the time came, his name was on the list. Two months later, I followed. These two events had a real impact on our lives, and we enjoyed an openness and climate for growth we had never experienced before.

Within three months, we sold our house in Drumheller, Alberta, where we had lived for twenty-three years. My husband had found a better job here in Edmonton. I was promoted in the company with which I was working, and we had purchased and moved into our new home here in the city.

Four months later my husband and two sons made a trip back to Drumheller. They didn't return when I expected them to, and most uneasily I settled down for the night. It was about 4:00 a.m. when a young policeman was at the door with the shocking news. In something of a freak one-car accident my husband and fifteen year old son, Bernard, had been killed and Matthew was in the hospital, seriously injured and suffering from shock and exposure. They weren't found until four and a half hours later.

There were many times I suffered without growing much, because I had stifled growth by my lack of acceptance of the situations in which I found myself. This time it was different. I didn't blame anyone or want anyone to feel responsible, neither did I feel any bitterness toward God. All I could think was that God is Love and in his infinite wisdom and mercy he had taken to himself two of his very own dear children. How could I complain; they were his first.

For the next three or four months things got done rather mechanically. Daily visits to the hospital, taking care of legal matters, and trying to keep family and home together during a severely cold winter was exhausting.

Matthew finally returned home in a body cast, unable to care much for himself, but cast and all, he somehow managed to attend Sunday services with the family.

Music has always had an important place in our family's life but after this accident, much as I loved to sing, the

nd just never got past the lump in throat. However, one Sunday about en or eight months later, the words the hymns really came alive for me. lt a tremendous surge of joy, and this e the sound just came tumbling out. e Lord had truly healed my broken rt.

Matthew and I both were back at rk within the year, but things were going that well. I drifted from job to . Each time there were problems at me, I would leave a job and come k to spend more time with the family. About three years ago, I faced another sis. My thirteen year old daughter felt home situation was simply unbear-e, so she left home trying to make it what she found to be a pretty cruel rld. Again I was unwilling to accept situation, but when things seemed kest I asked the Lord to guide me to neone who could help. My prayers re answered in a very beautiful way. I s led directly to a priest who in his n quiet and peaceful manner tries oment by moment to live the Focolare rituality of unity. So, through him I met this movement. What a blessing! adually I have been able to let go and holding this heartbreak up to the rd, he has showed me again how ough acceptance of my suffering for sake he could and would bring peace my soul.

My daughter did finally return and our relationship began to grow, but many problems remained unsolved. I still did not see clearly the harm I was doing myself and others by carrying these burdens alone. There was still something much deeper that had to happen, and in fighting it, within two years there was another break in her home life. I now realize there are changes I have to make within myself. I have to become less impulsive, more ready to listen, to be open, to forgive and to accept that I was part of her problem. I have to love much more. She is home again now, and though neither of us is perfect, there is obvious growth taking place. With God's help it will continue. She gave me a little card recently in which she wrote, "Thank you for listening Mom." That tells me something special is happening to both of us.

Perhaps the hardest part of being a widow is seeing your children leave home. Four of them are now married and have begun families of their own, and it is a real joy to have these little ones again in my home.

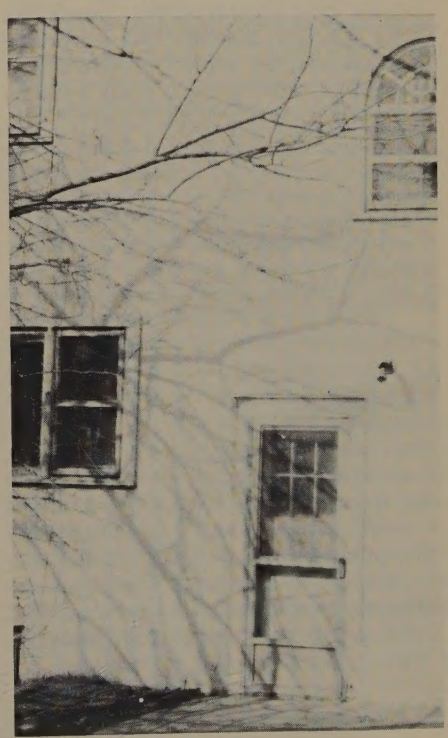
Last year, for several reasons, I let Paul spend the summer with my daughter and her family who were visiting here from Toronto. Shortly after that, Regan left on his holidays and before he came back Kevin left for New York, this while Susan was still away from home. I felt terribly alone. All my married life I have prayed that God would take at least one of my children into his special service, but I was expecting it to happen my way. It seemed that Kevin decided one day and left almost the next and I wondered how an answer to prayer could hurt so much. It didn't last too long, however, and I thank God for this gift he is giving me. I am now more than ready to share him with many, many people.

About this time, some young people I knew called long distance to ask if they could stay with me for a few days. Then and there I decided my home would always be open, especially to young people. As a result I feel I already have a whole new family, larger than I could ever have hoped to have. They are like flowers in a garden; each day someone comes and brings new beauty and love into my life.

Just recently, Regan decided to share a basement suite with a friend of his and it seemed as though a part of me had been cut off. Again I am reminded of Jesus Crucified and Forsaken. I have lifted him up into the capable hands of his heavenly Father. I've learned to lean more and more on the Lord and I know there are many more things he will be asking of me, but he has made me realize that life really is worth living to the fullest and that every suffering accepted for his sake brings a blessing.

Rosemary Paetz

Putting the key n the door



When I came home from work one y not long ago, I was standing on the ont porch putting the key in the door d a few disturbing thoughts flashed rough my mind. I thought that I came me like this many times before and as on as I opened the door, I acted as if vere not a Christian.

For some minutes I stood there with e key in the door wondering what to and thinking about what I had been ing too often up til now. I imagined w enthusiastically my children would eet me as soon as I opened the door, w the little ones would hang about y neck and cover my cheeks with kisses, how the older boys would bear-hug and knock me off my feet, and how as soon as I was down all six kids would pile on top giggling and laughing with glee. I imagined the days when the weather was warmer and the kids would see me walk around the far corner of the block and rush to meet me halfway with open arms and puckered lips. These thoughts made me happy . . . but not fully happy. Something was not quite right.

I knew I had to pull the key out of the door and work something out before going inside. For, after all the hugs and kisses, what did I usually do then? The

images that flashed across my mental screen gave me a little jolt. I could see myself standing before my wife as she was stirring something on the stove with one hand and holding the baby on her hip with the other hand. I could see myself giving her a full blow-by-blow account of all the things that happened to me at work that day; I could even see that both of my hands were moving freely as I dramatized my stories with gestures. And then I saw my wife's face straining to listen to every word and even turning back toward me between the interruptions of the baby's cries and the questions of the three children doing homework at the kitchen table next to her. She was working very hard to love me.

As I stood there on the porch holding the key in my hand, I realized that from a Christian point of view (and even from a purely human one!) my behavior was often quite ridiculous. For, if a Christian is a person who is recognized by his love for his neighbors, then I certainly was not recognizable as a Christian after I came home from work. Sometimes I didn't even think of my own wife as one of those "neighbors" I was supposed to be loving.

Finally I saw what was wrong. I had been coming home with a lot of baggage — with all the accomplishments and all the troubles of my working day, which I could hardly wait to share with my wife. But too often I had burst in on her with a long speech about what *I* did and what happened to *me*. Too often I had thoughtlessly dumped all my baggage right on top of her. How often did I consider that she had a working day, too, that she might want to share? How often did I come in ready to listen and ready to help with the kids?

Tossing the key up and down in the palm of my hand, I wondered whether many husbands had this problem, especially when their wives are housewives. I wondered whether it was a typical problem for husbands to come home expecting to be loved rather than to love.

Something inside of me told me that all this wondering was an escape from the present moment. So then and there I resolved that every time I came home from work and put the key in the door, I would try to leave all the events of the day outside on the front porch and that I would turn the key in the door with the intention to be the first to love.

Sometimes I forget. But when I remember, our home is a happier one that evening. My wife notices the difference.

Tom Hartmann

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